

Mollohan Supports Resolution "Disapproving" of Iraq War Escalation

(February 16, 2007)

-- Congressman Alan Mollohan voted for a House resolution that expresses disapproval of the Administration's plan to send more than 21,000 additional combat troops into the growing civil war in Iraq. The resolution also expressed support for U.S. military personnel already deployed.

The resolution, which passed 246 to 182, is a declaration of Congressional opposition to President Bush's plan to deploy additional troops.

"My position on the Iraq War is uncomplicated," Mollohan said on the Floor of the House Friday. "I voted against the initial war resolution back in 2002, mostly because I never believed the President made a compelling argument that Iraq posed the sort of substantive threat to the United States that would justify war and the considerable human, political, and financial costs it would bring. I thought it was a bad decision at the time and I think it's a bad decision today."

Mollohan noted that all Iraqis must take responsibility for their own security as the Kurds have been doing all along in the northern part of Iraq.

"Opponents of the resolution have charged that it undermines our troops," Mollohan said after the vote. "On the contrary, my colleagues and I who oppose the President's escalation policy have spent the last four years fighting for our troops to have all of the equipment - including the up-armored Humvees, the body armor, and the radio jammers to block improvised explosive devices -- they need. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to support all of our troops who are in harm's way and I will not support any effort that would jeopardize their safety."

Mollohan said the many hours of debate on the resolution and the 52 recent hearings conducted on issues related to the war are evidence that Congress is now providing much-needed oversight of the Iraq war.

Mollohan said that Friday's Congressional action may be the "last chance to draw this government back together on Iraq. It is the last call for us to work together - Democrat and Republican, legislative and executive - on ending this war. It is the last call for the President to come back to

the people."

The invasion began in spring 2003. Since then, more than 3,100 U.S. military men and women have been killed and almost 24,000 wounded. Since the beginning of combat operations in 2003, the estimated number of insurgents has increased five-fold to over 25,000.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reported that the amount appropriated and requested so far (including the president's request last week) for the wars in Iraq totals upwards of \$746 billion.

Editor's Note: Below is the text of the Floor Statement delivered by Congressman prior to the vote on the House resolution.

HON. ALAN B. MOLLOHAN

DRAFT FLOOR STATEMENT ON IRAQ RESOLUTION

FEBRUARY 16, 2007

MR. SPEAKER, I RISE IN SUPPORT OF THE RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO ESCALATE THIS WAR.

MY POSITION ON THE IRAQ WAR IS UNCOMPLICATED. I VOTED AGAINST THE INITIAL WAR RESOLUTION BACK IN 2002, MOSTLY BECAUSE I NEVER BELIEVED THE PRESIDENT MADE A COMPELLING ARGUMENT THAT IRAQ POSED THE SORT OF SUBSTANTIVE THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES THAT WOULD JUSTIFY WAR AND THE CONSIDERABLE HUMAN, POLITICAL, AND FINANCIAL COSTS IT WOULD BRING. I THOUGHT IT WAS A BAD DECISION AT THE TIME, AND I THINK IT'S A BAD DECISION TODAY.

IN MY LIMITED TIME THIS AFTERNOON, I'D LIKE TO COMMENT ON A COUPLE OF

REFRAINS THAT WE KEEP HEARING. THE FIRST IS THE PRESIDENT'S REPEATED CRITICISM THAT THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS RESOLUTION ARE PRE-JUDGING A PLAN THAT HASN'T EVEN BEEN -- QUOTE -- "GIVEN A CHANCE TO WORK." HE MAKES THAT CHARGE WITH A TONE OF WONDERMENT . . . AS THOUGH SOMEHOW IT WEREN'T OUR DUTY TO ANTICIPATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIFFERENT COURSES OF ACTION AND AVOID THE BAD ONES BEFORE EMBARKING ON THEM.

IF
MORE OF US HAD PREJUDGED HIS 2002 DECISION TAKING US TO WAR BEFORE IT WAS -- QUOTE -- "GIVEN A CHANCE TO WORK," WE WOULDN'T BE HAVING THIS DEBATE TODAY.

THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TODAY AND 2002 IS THAT A MAJORITY OF THIS HOUSE AND THIS CONGRESS ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT HE ENJOYED FIVE YEARS AGO. WE'RE NO LONGER WILLING TO SUSPEND JUDGEMENT AND TRUST THE DECIDER. THAT SHOULD SURPRISE PRECISELY NO ONE. FOR FOUR YEARS WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO TRUST THIS ADMINISTRATION --

- TO TRUST, AS THE VICE PRESIDENT EMPHATICALLY DECLARED, THAT THEY KNOW WHERE THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ARE,
- TO TRUST THAT THE IRAQIS WOULD WELCOME US AS LIBERATORS,
- TO TRUST THAT WE HAD A LARGE ENOUGH INVASION FORCE TO STABILIZE THE COUNTRY,
- TO TRUST THAT THE SHIA WOULD FIND COMMON CAUSE WITH THE SUNNI AND THE KURD IN A UNITED IRAQ,
- TO TRUST THAT IRAQ'S OIL RESERVES WOULD PAY FOR ITS RECONSTRUCTION,
- TO TRUST THAT IRAQ WOULD SERVE AS A BEACON OF DEMOCRATIC IDEALS THROUGHOUT THE MID-EAST,
- TO TRUST THAT THOSE EARLY SIGNS OF A GROWING INSURGENCY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN THE "LAST THROES" OF A FEW "DEAD-ENDERS"

AND
NOW THE PRESIDENT ASKS US NOT TO PREJUDGE HIS PLAN TO PUT ANOTHER 21,000 AMERICANS IN HARM'S WAY. HE ASKS US TO TRUST HIM YET AGAIN. WITH RESPECT AND HUMILITY, MR. SPEAKER, I ASK HIM -- HOW CAN WE? AND HOW CAN HE EVEN ASK IT OF US?

PARAPHRASING THE PRESIDENT, FOOL ME ONCE, SHAME ON YOU, FOOL ME FIVE TIMES, SHAME ON ME.

ANOTHER
CRITICISM OF THIS MEASURE THAT WE'VE HEARD REPEATED OVER AND OVER THIS

WEEK IS THAT, AS A NONBINDING RESOLUTION, ITS PASSAGE AND THIS DEBATE IS MEANINGLESS.

MR. SPEAKER, THIS RESOLUTION IS FAR FROM MEANINGLESS. IF NEED BE, CONGRESS WILL END THIS WAR -- WITH BINDING LEGISLATION.

AS EVEN THE PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGES, WE RETAIN THE POWER OF THE PURSE, AND WE WILL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE THAT POWER. BUT, JUST AS WARS SHOULD BE STARTED WITH A UNIFIED GOVERNMENT, SO TOO SHOULD WARS BE ENDED WITH A UNIFIED GOVERNMENT.

AND THAT IS THE MEANINGFULNESS OF THIS RESOLUTION. IT IS THE LAST CHANCE TO DRAW THIS GOVERNMENT BACK TOGETHER ON IRAQ.

IT IS THE LAST CALL FOR US TO WORK TOGETHER -- DEMOCRAT AND REPUBLICAN, LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE -- ON ENDING THIS WAR.

IT IS THE LAST CALL FOR THE PRESIDENT TO COME BACK TO THE PEOPLE.

HE MAY IGNORE THAT CALL. HE MAY DISMISS THIS RESOLUTION AND THIS DEBATE AS MEANINGLESS. HE MAY DISMISS THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE EXPRESSED THROUGH 439 NEWLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AS MEANINGLESS.

BUT IF HE DOES, MR. SPEAKER, HE FORCES US TO MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT HIM. I HOPE THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN.

I URGE MY COLLEAGUES TO VOTE FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

AND I URGE THE PRESIDENT TO LISTEN TO THIS DEBATE AND TO JOIN WITH US.